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SUBJECT: USAU: AMBASSADOR COURVILLE'S MEETING WITH AU  
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN MAZIMHAKA

11. (U) This cable is from the U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU) Dr. Cindy L. Courville.

12. (U) SUMMARY: On November 27, Ambassador Cindy L. Courville met with the African Union Deputy Chairman Patrick Mazimhaka to discuss the Democracy and Electoral Unit (DEAU), Preventive Diplomacy, Logistics Depot Advisor, and the visit of a Congressional Delegation November 28-30. END SUMMARY.

13. (U) PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Cindy Courville, USAU DCM Alfreda Meyers, USAID Liaison Pamela Foster and the Assistant to the Deputy Chairman Marie Claire.

14. (SBU) DEAU: Ambassador Courville thanked Deputy Chairman Mazimhaka for the cooperation between the AU and the US in working to stand up the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit. The Deputy Chairman informed the Ambassador that interviews for the three staff positions (Head of Unit, Elections Officer and Finance Officer) for the DEAU had been conducted and that he would provide the list of selected candidates to review by December 4. The next step would be to pass the proposed ranked candidates to the AU Chairman for approval and once selected, letters of offer would be sent to the candidates. The Ambassador expressed interest in when the selected candidates will begin work at the DEAU. Mazimhaka anticipates the three candidates will take up their posts in January 2008. Ambassador Courville suggested the January AU Summit would make an excellent platform to announce the establishment of the DEAU. The Deputy Chairman agreed.

15. (U) DEAF: Ambassador Courville mentioned the recent visit by the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance and USAID Administrator Henrietta Holsman Fore, noting Fore was impressed by the level of cooperation between AU and USAU. The Ambassador told Mazimhaka the Administrator has agreed in principle to look into finding additional money to help establish the Democratic and Electoral Assistance Fund (DEAF). The standing up of the DEAU will provide leverage for additional funds.

16. (U) Ambassador Courville informed the Deputy Chairman, in an October meeting with Chairman Konare provided him with a generic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as a working draft from which to develop a formal agreement for funding. She also noted that on December 1 the leadership of the AU Partners Group (AUPG) working groups will rotate. Germany will assume responsibility for the Governance group, the Swedish for the HIV/AIDS group and the US for Peace and Security group.

17. (U) Preventive Diplomacy. Ambassador Courville reminded the Deputy Chairman that the Preventive Diplomacy grant which expires November 30, 1007 will be extended until May 30, 12008. This enables the AU to expend the remainder of funds.

¶8. (U) Logistics Depot Advisor: Ambassador Courville informed Mazimhaka that a Logistics Depot Advisor had been selected to replace Bob Cunningham and expected to arrive in January. The Ambassador asked for clarification as to whether the replacement Advisor would also be physically located at the AU as was his predecessor. The Deputy Chairman will respond after checking that the space is still available.

¶9. (U) Congressional Delegation visits: Ambassador Courville informed the Deputy Chairman of two US Congressional Delegations November 28-30 and asked whether the Commissioner for Peace and Security Commissioner might be available for an office call.

¶10. (C) The Ambassador briefed the Deputy Chairman confidentially on the anticipated visit of the Secretary of

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State on December 5th and informed him of the Secretary's desire to address the African Union. She also informed him of the Tripartite Heads of State meeting and the Ministerials on Sudan and Somalia. While stressing the &close hold8 nature of the planning of the Secretary's visit, she said, a note verbale would follow. Mazimhaka expressed concern about the December 5th date, noting that the majority of AU leadership would be in Egypt for a pre-meeting in advance of the December 7-8 AU/EU Lisbon Summit. He also suggested the Secretary might consider visiting the AU at the end of

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January for the Summit rather than coming in early December.

¶11. (C) Ambassador Courville told Mazimhaka that although A/S Frazier is committed to holding a high level International Contact Group (ICG) on Somalia, the AU's proposed dates of December 12-13 are not possible for her.

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Thus one proposal is to convene the ICG meeting in January before the Summit. Mazimhaka noted the suggestion but made no further comment.

¶12. (U) Next Steps:

-- Continue to follow up on the progress in establishing the DEAU and the need for funds to support the DEAF.

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